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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Eternal God, we place our hopes in You for our future is in Your hands. Strong deliverer, be our shelter in these challenging times. Lord, give our lawmakers the understanding, humility, and clarity they need to keep America strong. May they be good stewards of the generous gifts you have showered upon our land, laboring valiantly to assure that justice and righteousness will prevail. Help them to commit their plans to You, believing that You know what is best for our Nation and world. We pray in Your gracious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in morning business until 12:30 today. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans the second 30 minutes. Chairman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY are expected to make opening statements about 11 o'clock this morning.

Just as an aside, this is a new day in the Senate. We are so grateful for the hard work of Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY. The amendment is offered as their substitute amendment. I am very proud of the work they did. We are going to have to work through a number of amendments, but when it is all over, we are going to send over a bill I hope the House will accept. If not, we will have a quick conference—I hope that is not necessary—and continue the work on our other appropriations bills and finish the problems we have had in being behind.

The CR will fund the government until October 1. We hope by then we can complete work on our appropriations bills, so in 2014 we don't have to go through all this again—CRs and omnibuses and all that kind of stuff.

We are going to recess from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. today for weekly caucus meetings. We have extended that for an extra 15 minutes because the President is going to be here today.

We expect to begin consideration of H.R. 933, which is the appropriations bill I just talked about, following the caucus meetings we are going to have.

THE RYAN BUDGET

Mr. REID. Earlier this year, with November election losses fresh in their minds, top Republicans promised a kinder, gentler Republican Party, a Republican Party that cared about "every American . . . achieving their dreams." Republicans banded about words such as "fairness" and "opportunity." They made overtures toward women and Hispanics. They promised cooperation and an end to brinkmanship. House Majority Leader CANTOR even spoke of "an agenda based on a shared vision of creating the conditions for health, happiness, prosperity for more Americans and their families."

Rebranding, we thought, was underway. Then a few weeks passed and the Republican emphasis on fairness and equity made a direct U-turn back to where they started. Today the House Budget Committee Chairman PAUL RYAN will unveil an extreme budget that is anything but balanced. This budget reflects the same skewed priorities the Republican Party has championed for years, the same skewed priorities Americans rejected in November. The Ryan budget will call for more tax breaks for the wealthy, an end of Medicare as we know it, and Draconian cuts to education and other programs to help America's economy grow and prosper.

We have heard it many times and I will repeat it. Yogi Berra famously said, "It's déjà vu all over again," and it really is. We have seen this before, déjà vu all over again. The Ryan budget will shower more tax breaks on millionaires and continue to tilt the playing field to the advantage of big corporate interests and raise taxes for the middle class.

I know Congressman RYAN is held out to be this guru who understands things so well. What he understands is gimmickry and that is what he has done so well. He has pulled the wool over the eyes of those people in the House and they continue following him, but his

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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